

modern critical view of the Pentateuch, for example, then they would certainly have been severely punished ; and the Pope's undoubted right by Canon Law to burn them would have been tempered only by mercy and expediency. Yet the one may publicly state that he has been conscientiously faithful to an author whom he has in fact deliberately falsified ; the other may in cold blood assure the public that they will vainly search the Wycliffite Bible for sentences which, in fact, he knows to be there. And their reward is not only popularity with the multitude, but the highest official recognition. So long as these things are written and approved under the Pope's eyes—if only he had eyes for them—so long will partisans like the "Church Times" and "Athenæum" critics continue to circulate this base historical coin.



Bishop Gore on the Ministry.¹

BY THE EDITOR.

AT the present day there is no Bishop, perhaps no Churchman, whose words are more generally and more carefully heeded than those of the Bishop of Birmingham, whether by men who agree with him or by men who do not. And when he tells us that his motive in writing the present book has been the frequency of the assertion that recent criticism "has weakened and rendered untenable the position that the episcopate is the necessary and divinely given link of continuity and cohesion in the Church universal," we give all the more earnest attention to what he writes because of the vital importance of the subject. This must be the justification, if any be needed, of another article in our pages after the two that appeared in the last number. It seemed necessary, in view of the general attention given to the Bishop's book, to endeavour to convey some impressions of one who earnestly desired to see and to face the latest and best that

¹ "Orders and Unity." By Charles Gore, D.D. London: *John Murray*. Price 3s. 6d. net.

could be said for the school that Bishop Gore represents. It is, of course, impossible to touch on every point raised in this most interesting book, but an endeavour will be made to deal with the more important lines of thought discussed in its pages.

1. Almost the first point that strikes the reader is the difficulty of obtaining a clear idea of the Bishop's real attitude to the New Testament. There are statements that seem inconsistent and even contradictory. Thus, on page 4, we have the following striking testimony to the value and importance of the New Testament :

“The Anglican communion has a distinctive duty or opportunity, which is to realize and express a catholicism which is scriptural; which will admit nothing as essential in doctrine or order which is not verified on appeal to the documents of the New Testament. This is our charter of freedom. We cannot be content merely to appeal to the teaching of the Church, without reference to the supreme standard.”

This is an encouraging start, for it indicates a position which, if only it could be regarded as common to all Churchmen, would go far to resolve our difficulties. In the same way we read :

“There is not found in the New Testament any basis for the idea of a priestly class in the Church occupying any nearer position to God than the rest of their brethren, or brought into any more intimate relations to Him” (p. 65).

So, also, we have the following frank admission :

“Practically we must recognize that the presbyters and the bishops of the local church are the same persons” (p. 117).

And we are also told that the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century were vindicating certain Divine principles, “especially the principle of the supremacy of Scripture in the Church against the corruption of tradition, and the principle of human liberty against spiritual tyranny” (p. 185).

“It is upon their vindication of true principles—upon their passionate love of Scripture and their strong claim for spiritual liberty—that I seem to see the Divine blessing resting” (p. 185).

Yet suddenly the reader is arrested by observing certain statements that apparently run quite counter to these very frank and unqualified utterances :

"It must be admitted that if the documents of the New Testament stood alone . . . we should feel that various tendencies towards different kinds of organization were at work in the Christian Church, that the picture presented was confused, and that no decisive conclusion as to the form of the Christian ministry could be reached. But, in fact, the documents of the New Testament are only some of the documents which belong to a great historical movement" (p. 83).

And again :

"It has become evident that the Bible cannot stand alone. The books of the New Testament are products of the Church. . . . Moreover, the documents which are included in the canon are separated by no gulf from those just outside it" (p. 191).

On this latter point it may be worth while to compare the words of that great historical scholar, Professor Gwatkin :

"There is no more striking contrast in the whole range of literature than that between the creative energy of the Apostolic writers and the imitative poverty of the sub-Apostolic" ("Early Church History to A.D. 313," vol. i., p. 98).

And so we have two voices equally clear and distinct. The supremacy of Scripture could not have been more clearly or strikingly stated, and, moreover, certain distinctive Roman doctrines are expressly rejected by the Bishop because they do not and cannot fulfil this requirement (pp. 197 *et seq.*). And yet on those questions which the Bishop himself favours and regards as essential, even though he admits that they are not found in Scripture, he is compelled to bring in the Church and say that "the documents of the New Testament are only some of the documents which belong to a great historical movement." Can this position be regarded as satisfactory? If the documents of the New Testament are, to use the Bishop's own phrase, "the final testing-ground of doctrine," then assuredly they must stand alone, and cannot be simply "merged in a miscellaneous mass of authorities" (Gore, "Body of Christ," p. 223).

2. It is almost equally difficult to appreciate the force of Bishop Gore's argument for episcopacy. He starts by saying that

"the Christian Church, as it appeared in history for 1,500 years, had for its officers bishops, priests, and deacons" (p. 75).

Of course, everything depends upon what is meant by these terms, since, on another page, the Bishop has already admitted (p. 117) that in the New Testament presbyters and Bishops "are the same persons." There is something lacking in the logic here. Then we are told that (p. 76) Christ instituted the ministry in the persons of His Apostles, and that this ministry was transmitted to a succession of persons down the generations. Here, again, we have statements for which no New Testament proof is given. In particular there is one difficult question, which, so far as I know, is not considered by Bishop Gore in this or in his earlier book. Was each of the Twelve competent to ordain and thus transmit an Apostolic ministry? Or could they exercise their authority only as they agreed among themselves? That is to say, if each Apostle could have been the fount of an Apostolic Church, would there not have been twelve Apostolic Churches? The Roman Catholic Church is logical in vesting all authority in St. Peter; but if it should be said that authority was given, not to the Twelve individually, but collectively, we are compelled to ask for the historical evidence that the Twelve ever formed themselves into a body or college to ordain successors. Then, again, does the laying-on of hands involve transmission or commission? Dr. Sanday seems to us decidedly truer to fact when he tells us that the latter, rather than the former, is the correct idea. Indeed, Dr. Sanday says that "it really cannot mean" transmission ("Conception of Priesthood," p. 167).

Another and curious result of Bishop Gore's tendency to raise, as it seems to us, false issues is seen when he speaks of the appointment of Matthias as to an "episcopate," or "office of supervision" (p. 86). Even the quotation from the Psalms does not warrant the use of a term that really begs the question, for the "episcopate" of Judas has no real relation to the question of episcopacy in the Apostolic Church. It would seem to be in every way better to avoid terms which are not necessary and tend to prejudge the issue. Again, we are told that

"only those of the superior or Apostolic order lay on hands to supply the gift of the Holy Spirit" (p. 162).

But we cannot help asking, What was the meaning of the laying-on of hands by Ananias, by which the Holy Spirit was given to Saul of Tarsus?

Of course, Ignatius forms one of the strongest arguments in favour of Bishop Gore's position. But there are two points which are overlooked in the consideration. In all the references of Ignatius to episcopacy there is no suggestion of an episcopal *succession*, and certainly nothing *diocesan*. As Dr. Sanday said many years ago, the earliest *episcopos* was more like the rector of the mother parish of a large town than anything else. We believe it is no anachronism, but true to everything we know of the Ignatian epistles, to say that their testimony to episcopacy would be quite adequately explained on the basis of a purely congregational episcopacy, without any thought of succession.

3. It is also very difficult to follow, and still more to accept, the Bishop of Birmingham's argument for priesthood in the ministry. He starts with the idea of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, and from this argues that the Church as a whole is in some senses prophetic, priestly, and kingly. But when the argument is narrowed down to the officials of the Church, the theory begins to halt very seriously. We are told that "in all its functions the Church acts through and with its appointed officers" (p. 153), though this can hardly be taken literally in the sense that the Church as such cannot perform any functions apart from appointed officers. But what is still more striking is the Bishop's statement (p. 153), couched in these words: "*Therefore we should expect to find the ministers or officers of the Church in some special sense prophets, priests, and kings*" (italics are mine). Is not this a dubious and illogical conclusion? In whatever sense the Church is prophetic and royal, in that sense only can we predicate priestliness of it.

The real question, which does not seem to be clearly answered by the Bishop, is as to the unique sense in which the ministry is a priesthood. He agrees with Dr. Denny that there can be no Christian priest mediating between God and man, and he fully admits that the title "priest" (*ἱερεύς*, *sacerdos*) was

not at first applied to the ministers of the Church. But he does not seem to us to give due attention to the position of Lightfoot, lately confirmed by Gwatkin, that it is to Cyprian that we owe the earliest use of *ιερεὺς* for the Christian ministry. Yet even Cyprian applied it to the Bishops only, and not to the presbyters. The best way of testing whether the Christian ministry is a real priesthood is by the application to it of the classical and Scriptural definition of a priest in Heb. v. 1: "For every high priest taken from among men is *ordained for men in things pertaining to God*, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." A priest represents man to God, just as a prophet represents God to man. Now, in what sense does any Christian minister represent his lay-brethren before God as distinct from their own position as priests? Bishop Gore says: "This is a question of words" (p. 161). True; but, as Lightfoot says:

"Words express things; and the silence of the Apostles still requires an explanation" ("Philippians," p. 264).

One other illustration of the Bishop's treatment of this point must be given. First of all he says that

"it may well have been left for the Church to decide, according to the wisdom given to it, as to the precise allocation of functions. Its decision, as the New Testament would have us believe, would have heavenly sanction" (p. 163).

And then immediately follow these words:

"We must conclude that when once it was established that Christ was a priest—the great High Priest—and His Church a priestly body, it became inevitable and right that the ordained officers of that body should be called priests" (p. 163).

It is difficult to follow this argument, which commences with "It may well have been left for the Church to decide," and then takes it for granted that it *was* the decision of the Church, "early, unanimous, and final," when we know, on the authority of Lightfoot and Gwatkin, that history gives no warrant for such a contention.

4. Not the least interesting and significant part of the Bishop's book is the frequent illustration afforded of the fallacy

of *non sequitur*. Thus, we are told first of all that the Apostles were the centre of unity, and then immediately after the ministry is said to have been derived "from the Apostles and Apostolic men" (p. 145). Indeed, the whole of that passage is almost a succession of instances of *non sequitur*. Again, it is urged that "the fundamental question for us is whether really Christ and His Apostolic interpreters laid down any law or principle of Church organization" (p. 4). Surely this is not the question. The fundamental issue is whether Christ and His Apostles laid down *any particular law* or principle of organization, and especially whether they laid down the law or principle for which the Bishop contends. Again, we are told that, as Jesus Christ was Prophet, Priest, and King, in some sense all the three elements of His pastoral office were to be carried out among men by His disciples (p. 35). But this will not logically carry us to the special priesthood required by Bishop Gore's theory. Of the silence of Ignatius as to episcopacy in writing to Rome, we read that, "though he has no occasion to mention the Church officers, yet it is inconceivable that he could have held the ideas which he did about the episcopate if he had had any doubt that Rome had a Bishop, as well as presbyters and deacons" (p. 125). Yet all history points to the absence of the episcopate so early in Rome. Perhaps the most striking instance of the Bishop's tendency to the fallacy of *non sequitur* is the illustration of physical generation (p. 169) which he uses in opposition to Canon Hay Aitken's contention as to the danger of the mechanical idea in religion. How the Bishop could have employed this illustration is surprising. He says that he confronts his objector with a "staggering problem." The real difficulty, however, is to account for the Bishop's apparent inability to see that the illustration is far from carrying the conclusion that he wishes to draw from it.

5. We are also greatly surprised to observe the Bishop's apparent inability to appreciate the position of his opponents. Thus he believes (p. 16) that the main obstacle which his view of the ministry has to encounter lies in the fact that the

unworthiness of the ministers has so often prejudiced men's minds against the very idea of their office. Will the Bishop allow us to assure him that this is absolutely incorrect? The main obstacle to his theory of the Apostolical succession is the fact that it is both absent from and really opposed to Scripture, to say nothing of history. And the objection to it would be just as valid if all the ministers of the centuries had been personally worthy men. Again, he speaks of

"a cheap philanthropic Gospel, unaccompanied by any careful or exacting doctrine about God and sin and redemption, which plays a great part in popular Protestantism in England and America" (p. 24).

We wonder where the Bishop obtained his information on this point. So far as can be seen it is almost the reverse of true. Like many others of his school, the Bishop confuses between rationalistic Protestantism and Evangelical Protestantism, but he must know that the popular Protestantism of England and America is very largely of the latter rather than of the former kind, whatever may be said of Germany. And of such it is certainly not true to say that it preaches a Gospel without any careful or exacting doctrine about God and sin and redemption.

Popular Protestantism is also charged with laying such emphasis on the allegiance of the individual soul to Christ as to make all corporate fellowship "a subsequent matter of voluntary organization" (p. 40). Yet only a page before he describes Protestantism in these words :

"Those who thus believe and are saved find themselves bound in obedience to Christ to combine—for the ministry of the Word and Sacraments and for mutual assistance" (p. 39).

If, therefore, "they are bound," how can it be a matter of "voluntary organization"?

The Bishop also says that

"where Protestantism is the prevailing influence, people pass from one Church to another, as they are attracted by this preacher or that, this service or that, without any constraining sense of obligation to one body" (p. 189).

We should greatly value proofs of this tendency, for there are certainly very many places in which Evangelical Protestantism

is "the prevailing influence" where there is a devoted attachment to the particular organization with which the people happen to be associated. Then, again, we are told of "the decay of the distinctive forms and barriers of Protestantism" (p. 205), as though Protestantism, as expressive of the cardinal tenets of Evangelical Churchmen, Presbyterians, and Methodists, to say nothing of other bodies, is undergoing a process of disintegration. Perhaps the most surprising statement about Protestantism is the charge that its general tendency

"is to seek refuge from the difficulties of thought in the opportunities of philanthropic or evangelistic action" (p. 220).

Here, again, it is difficult to believe that the Bishop is speaking from first-hand or intimate knowledge. We should have thought that philanthropy, at any rate, was quite as generally associated with members of the Christian Social Union, who are in general sympathy with Bishop Gore's ecclesiastical position. But if the Bishop thinks that Protestant evangelistic and philanthropic work is due to a desire to seek refuge from the difficulties of thought, we believe that he is altogether mistaken. On the contrary, it is simply because Evangelicalism has a gospel of redemption that it is able and anxious to do evangelistic and philanthropic work. Was not the great Lord Shaftesbury a proof of this? And what of Moody, Barnardo, and others?

There are other points of importance in the book which space does not allow us to discuss. We must content ourselves by affirming our strong conviction that the Bishop is endeavouring to maintain an impossible position, and we do so on three grounds.

1. It is not true to the New Testament, and if we accept that as supreme, the Bishop's contentions fail utterly and hopelessly. In a recent review of Professor Gwatkin's book in the *Times*, the writer, while admitting that the argument from silence is not necessarily and always conclusive, yet argues that the High Churchman

"has still to deal with what to the plain man may seem the most formidable silence of all. Is it conceivable that, if such a tremendous obligation had

been laid upon the Church at the outset for all time, it would simply be not disproved by the documents of the earliest age, that the ecclesiastical tradition should not be confirmed by any express declaration in the recorded words of the Founder, or in the writings of His first disciples?"

2. Is the Bishop's position true to history? There is a hiatus between the documents of the New Testament and the Bishop's reading of the history of the second and third centuries. Lightfoot's view is as true to-day as ever :

"The episcopate was formed, not out of the apostolic order, by localization, but out of the presbyteral, by elevation; and the title which originally was common to all came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them" ("Philippians," p. 196).

The words of the *Spectator* in reviewing the Bishop's book are well worthy of attention :

"It strikes us as almost profane to inquire whether such a mechanical theory of the transmission of grace can claim authority from the lips of Christ Himself. Certainly it cannot. Nor has it any support in any Pauline principle. In defending it, the Bishop appeals, not to principles, but to deductions from supposed historical facts. . . . And we may add that a theory supposed to be based upon Scripture which met with no acceptance from Lightfoot, Westcott, or Hort, comes to us already more than half condemned."

3. Not least of all the Bishop's position is not true to life to-day. Quite recently a valuable pamphlet has been issued by a well-known Presbyterian minister in Dublin,¹ which is well worthy of attention by members of the Church of England. Mr. Gardiner speaks with the utmost frankness as to the conditions of reunion, and in so doing he claims the following for his own Church :

"Any proposals for union which have any chance even of being considered must proceed on the assumption that we respect one another's position. Now, I say, from the bottom of my heart, that I do respect yours. I respect the learning, devotion, and earnestness of your Bishops and clergy. I admire the piety of your people. I find myself at one with you in heart and sympathy. But you must remember our position. We are not much inferior to you in point of numbers in Ireland. If you have half of England, we have eight-tenths of Scotland. And we outnumber you in Wales. We have all the Reformed Churches of the Continent, except the Lutherans, who in

¹ Lecture on "Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism." By the Rev. F. Stuart Gardiner, M.A. Dublin: Eason and Son. Price 6d.

some respects are more akin to us. We are much more numerous than you in America, and in the Colonies we are not much behind you. We have successful missions all over the world in no way inferior to yours. Our theologians and scholars are not less distinguished than yours. You have saints. So have we. You have seals to your ministry. So have we. You have evidence of Christ's presence in your Church. Not less have we. You have episodes in your Church history which are heroic and which thrill the blood when they are recalled. So have we. And I beg of you to remember that we are proud of our Churchmanship."

And Dr. Sparrow Simpson, a member of our Church, who quite evidently sympathizes with Bishop Gore's general position, recently spoke in the following candid terms, in a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey :

"We are, perhaps, the most undisciplined Church in Christendom. We have not been able to hold the spiritual movement of our nation together, nor blend in one the varieties of the Christian type. We have seen them part from us, one after another, to their loss and our own, erecting divisions outside our borders, rather than communities within; describing themselves as standing protests against our doctrine or our discipline; weakening the spiritual force of Christianity upon this nation. And then we invite them to reunite with a Church conspicuous for its own divisions and clamorous with discordant gospels."

In the face of these facts, can it be argued that non-episcopal Churches are ever likely to accept the Bishop's view as true to facts? As Dr. Stalker said some months ago in our columns, Presbyterianism can only consider the question of reunion on the basis of absolute equality in regard to ministerial validity.

To conclude. If Bishop Gore's book represents all that can be said for the position he maintains, then we are bound to add that it is far weaker than we had supposed, and we are not at all surprised that the Rev. J. H. Jowett, in referring to it the other day at Hull, should have described it as giving away Bishop Gore's case entirely. His statement of the position will certainly not satisfy the extreme men on his own side, for there are too many significant admissions in it. The fact is, that from the days of the Bishop's Bampton Lectures there have been two very distinct voices in his utterances. One voice bears witness to his early education, training, and influences; the other testifies to the impression made upon him by scholarship,

which, of course, he cannot ignore, and which he finds it very difficult to controvert. When he makes such significant admissions to the scholarship of men like Lightfoot, Hort, Gwatkin, and Lindsay, the admissions go far to destroy the very essence of his position.

We close by saying that, in our judgment, the doctrine of the Apostolical succession is at the basis of all our present-day differences. It was the foundation of the Tractarian Movement, and is still at the root of all ecclesiastical controversies. It behoves us to concentrate on this point and meet it fairly and squarely. Scripture, history, and experience, are undoubtedly on the side of the non-sacerdotal idea of the ministry, and the more thoroughly the Bishop's contentions are tested by this threefold criterion, the more impossible will the position appear. It is in vain that the Bishop endeavours to meet the objection to his theory, which is shown by the fact that the non-episcopal Churches manifest in abundance the fruit of the Spirit. To say that Protestants were rebellious against one Divine law and yet fearless champions of others is utterly illogical in view of his statement that Apostolical succession is "an essential principle of the Church's continuous life." If, therefore, non-episcopal Protestantism is without an *essential* principle, how is it possible to speak of the presence of the fruit of the Spirit in their midst? Those who know their New Testament, who believe both in primitive and post-Reformation Church History, and who rejoice in spiritual life wherever they find it, will endorse the words of the *Spectator* in the review already referred to :

"Although in the sixteenth century men might well have doubted whether the Apostolical succession were not necessary, as an essential principle, to a life of grace, after an experiment of three centuries they can doubt no longer. Churches which have, if any have, an Apostolical succession may give God thanks for it ; if they have it not, they need not repine."

